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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *June* 8. 1695

Queſt. 1. *YOU have given us ſome account of Silver, of its nature, and place of growth, but I don't remember the having read any thing in your* Mercuries *concerning theſe other Metals, therefore I deſire you'd give a ſhort Relation of the Names, Nature, and places from whence Gold, Tin, and Lead are taken?*

Anſw. The *Chymiſts* tell us all Metals are ſuperficially the ſame, only their two great Principles of Conſtitution, Sulphur, which has more of the Earth, and Quick-ſilver which is more Congenial to water, according to the ſeveral Combinations of theſe in quantity, and quality, and their different purity, give the various differences which we call the kinds of *Metals*. Gold, whoſe Chymical name is *Sol*, is ſaid to be of the moſt pure and beſt prepared Materials, wherefore it has many Attributes exceeding other Metals; as in its value, which if pure in the refiners fire loſeth none of its weight, and if allayed with baſer Metal, ſuch as Silver, or Copper, it looſes but equal to the quantity of this allay; and in its weight, which is the greateſt for its bulk of any Metal; as alſo its duration, which is ſuppoſed perpetual, and in Scripture is called corruptible, not in reſpect to its nature but poſſeſſion. It never ruſts, nor conſumes with often Melting; 'Tis true 'tis diſolvable by *Aqua Regis*, but then 'tis only broken in ſmall pieces, and the duſt of it precipitated and Collected, may be Melted, and again caſt into a Maſs of the ſame weight and value as before; Quick-ſilver will change its Colour and make it Brittle, but that's ſoon recover'd by the fire. It may likewiſe be extended beyond all other Metals, and beaten ſo thin as one grain of it to cover a Foot-Square; It attracts Mercurial and Arſenick ſteams in a wonderful manner, for if Gold be held in the Mouth, and Mercury toucht but with the Foot, or Toe, the Gold will ſoon turn white; but 'tis not good to be too bold with ſuch experiments, for fear of the Palſie; ſome who have taken many Mercurial medicines, have, to extract what they cou'd of them, to prevent their miſchievous conſequences, every day taken Gold Pills, which have been changed white tho taken many years after the Mercury; And 'tis ſaid of Dr. *Butler*, that he convinced Dr. *Mayern*, that Prince *Henry* had been Poyſon'd, by putting a piece of Gold into the mouth of the Corps, which he let remain but a little time, and when he took it out it was changed white. It is alſo Medicinal and Cordial, for Pills gilt draw venemous ſteams from the Principal parts to the Bowels, where mixing with the medicine, they are carryed off with it. It helps in the Kings Evil, by repelling and diſſipating the Humours, and hindring them from flowing faſter then nature can ſubdue them. It is found in *Barbary* in the ſand, waſhed from the Mountains into the Rivers, and in the South Weſt of *America*, it is dug out of mines by the *Spaniards Slaves*. The *Alchymiſt* tells us 'tis the Soul of all Metals, and extractable in ſmall quantity from each, and when ſeparated from them, they remain Brittle, Droſſy, and good for nothing. Agreeable to this, there is a ſtory of a *Dutch* Man who coming into the Tin Houſe of an *Engliſh* Gentleman, and ſeeing a good quantity melted in the trough, merrily asked the workmen what he ſhou'd give them for as much tin as he cou'd take out with a little wand he had in his hand? who anſwer'd him, what he pleas'd, he then dipped his wand in ſeveral times, and took off the Scales and put them in his Pocket, five years after this *Dutch-man* coming into *England* preſented the Gentleman with a Gold Ring, and told him 'twas the ſame Metal he had taken up with his wand; upon which he call'd to mind that the whole block of tin was ſpoil'd, and broke all to pieces when it came to be workt, and that the workmen ſaid the *Dutch-man* had Conjured it.

Tin by the *Chymiſts* call'd *Jupiter*, is a fine white Metal near the Colour of Silver, 'tis the lighteſt of all Metals and ſooneſt melts, therefore fit for Solder, and of it ſelf more Brittle then any, which is the reaſon they mix Lead and ſometimes Braſs with it in the making of Pewter. The leaves of it ſpread on a Glaſs Plate and encorporated with Quick-ſilver makes Looking-Glaſſes: 'Tis chiefly found in *Cornwall*, and before Queen *Maries* days only there, but then the Tinners being perſecuted and drove away, diſcovered it alſo in *Bohemia*. The antient *Phenicians* uſed to fetch it from hence, and were forced to dig it themſelves with brazen Inſtruments ſometimes found in our old tin-works. Hence ſome think the name of *Brittain* came, as being given this *Iſland* by theſe *Phenicians*, in whoſe, and in the *Hebrew* Language the name they call'd us by ſignifyed a Land of tin. There is a kind of tin in the *Eaſt-Indies* call'd *Tutenage*, but whether it be natural, or factitious of Silver is uncertain.

The Chymical name of Lead is *Saturn*, this Metal is common in many parts of the world; In *England* 'tis particularly found in *Darby-ſhire*; and *Sommerſet-ſhire*, 'tis heavier then any other Metal, or Mineral except Gold, or Quick-ſilver, and therefore uſed in Bullets; 'tis alſo more tough and flexible, yet not extendible to wire, as Siver, Steel, or Braſs; like Gold 'tis medicinally uſed to repel humours being beaten into thin Plates; and becauſe of this agreement with Gold in weight and medical uſe, ſome have ſuppoſed it the fitteſt Metal for tranſmutation. The Canker of Lead by Vinegar is called Ceruſe, the flowers on Calcination is white Lead, which higher burnt is call'd Red-Lead, much uſed in Plaiſters. The value of it is ſmall and therefore 'tis applyed to ſo many common uſes.

Queſt. 2. *I deſire your advice concerning Melancholly, I am a perſon of green years, have always liv'd in a very ſober, regular manner, endeavouring to avoid all ſuch actions as I thought evil, I know not any occaſion I have to be troubled, in Relation to any temporal, or Eternal Concern, yet my mind is ſometimes ſo overcharged with that ſad diſtemper, that it diſreliſhes my very being, and I can ſee nothing in the world ſo much as to wiſh for that I can imagine might render me more happy; if you could give me any light into the Cauſe of this, or lay me down ſome Rule of Life whereby I might avoid it, you would do me the greateſt Charity in the world.*

Anſw. If you are really that happy Man you tell us you are, your mind can have none, or but a little ſhare in the cauſe of this diſtemper, but it muſt depend chiefly upon your body, therefore 'twill be very proper to conſult a *Phiſitian*, next to which we know of nothing better then getting into Company at ſuch times, uſing all thoſe divertions which are agreeable to you, and you muſt ſtrive as much as poſſible againſt it, for ſince it is habitual you'll find the greater difficulty to remove it.

Queſt. 3. *I am near 22, having nothing to depend on but an imploy, which maintains me well, and in good Repute, but am much in Love with a Lady, whoſe fortune ſo far exceeds me, I e'ne diſpair of gaining her, yet am reſolved to give her Father a Viſit.*

Pray, tell me what to do? If the old Gentleman ſlights me, as I expect, whether I may not try his Daughter? And if ſhe does the ſame, what effect will this have as to

to me. I question not but being the best Jewel I have?
I hope you will favour this with an answer.

Answ. Since your design is honourable, and you take an honest way to effect it, if it fail it can be no injury to you, yet if the father refuse, in courting the daughter, you'll not only venture the getting a wife perhaps without mony enough to buy her self pins, but will also be guilty of a great piece of wickedness in drawing her from her duty.

Quest. 4. *Lately reading the History of* Oxford-writers, *in pag.* 244. *Mentioning the works of Sir* Edward Kelly, *in the which he gives an account of a Bottle of* Elixir, *found in the ruines of* Glastenbury-Abby, *with the which at* Trebona *in* Bohemia, Kelly *made projection, the 9th of* Decem. 1586. *with one small grain of the* Elixir, *(in proportion no bigger then the least grain of sand) upon one ounce and a quarter of common* Mercury, *and it produced almost an ounce of most pure Gold. At another time he made projection upon a piece of metal, cut out of a warming Pan, and without his touching, or handling, or melting the metal (only warming it in the fire, the* Elixir *being put thereon it was transmuted into pure Silver: The said Warming-Pan, and peice were sent to Queen* Elizabeth, *by her* Embassadour, *then residing at Prague, that by fitting the peice with the place where it was cut out, it might exactly appear to be a peice of the said Warming-Pan, the truth of this I very much doubt, therefore must earnestly entreat your thoughts upon the matter, in your next* Mercury, *to your humble Servant,* J. B.

The relation more at large you'll find in Elias Ashmole *his* Theatrum Chimmicum Brittan. Lond. 1652. p. 481.

Answ. We confess we know not well what to say to many express Histories of matter of Fact, of the same nature. We know not how to believe 'em, and yet it seems hardly modest in all cases to disbelieve 'em: All we'll say, to prevent persons being impos'd upon, is what some who pretend to understand these matters very well, have averted, that if this strange *Elixir* is to be got at all, it must be with small charges, though long watching and exact observation. And for the rest, let every man believe as much, or little on't as he pleases.

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